



**Think
Forward**

Coaching
Connecting
Inspiring
Young People

Chair
ThinkForward

Candidate Pack

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01. Welcome Letter

On behalf of the Board and our Executive team, I would like to thank you for your interest in joining ThinkForward as our new Chair.

Approaching the final two years of our five-year strategy, we feel this is an appropriate time to assess our progress against our goals set in the summer of 2020. It's also important to remind ourselves that those goals were set during the first year of the pandemic which was an incredibly challenging time for our young people and the world around us.

Our strategy has three goals; to grow both in terms of numbers of beneficiaries and income; to sustain our programmes and to be able to demonstrate the impact of our work.

I am delighted that, despite the first two years of the strategy being totally disrupted by the pandemic, we can report positive progress against all three.

- We worked with 1,356 young people during 2022/23, 5% more than the previous year, which itself was a 15% increase over the first year of our strategy.
- Our income was up 9% on 2021/22 at £2.6m.
- We are on track to achieve our target of working with 1,500 young people and are cautiously optimistic to reach £4m by the end of the strategic plan.

Our programmes have not just sustained, they have expanded. For example, we have been running a programme for the past two years supporting young black men in London who were at high risk of exclusion from mainstream schools. The goal was to enhance post-16 transition support for these young people most at risk of not being in employment, education, or training. The programme helped them achieve an 80% successful transition rate. Having successfully delivered on phase one, we are delighted to confirm that phase two has been commissioned and will be expanding to new locations supporting more young people.

We are so grateful to our partner schools and colleges, employers, and training providers on all our programmes who continue to support our work. Additionally, the generous pro bono support we receive from legal firms and management consultancies has helped us to build on our forward-looking strategy.

We are looking for a truly exceptional Chair, who will lead the Board and the Executive team towards realising ThinkForward’s full range of opportunities and ambitions as we build our next strategic plan, which we will launch in September 2025.

I am so proud of the first-class team at ThinkForward who are all dedicated to building a better, brighter, and more inclusive future for our young people. Our new Chair will be privileged to work alongside us as we realise our new vision to empower young people and sustain the charity for a strong and ambitious future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ashley', with a horizontal line underneath.

Ashley McCaul, Chief Executive



02. Executive Summary

ThinkForward empowers young people facing challenges to gain the confidence, independence, and skills they need to be ready for the world of work. We are looking for an experienced and passionate Chair to help lead us through the next stage of our strategy.

ThinkForward exists to prevent the next generation of youth unemployment. Our three personalised coaching programmes work with young people at a key stage in their lives, enabling them to gain the confidence, independence, and skills they need to make a successful transition from school into employment. The young people we work with face barriers such as lack of opportunities, growing up in poverty, having a learning disability or being at risk of exclusion. We are looking for a Chair who has a passion for addressing the inequity our young people face.

The successful candidate will be a strategic and facilitative leader, able to activate contribution from the Board in support of our programmes, impact, and partnerships. They will bring understanding of both governance and civil society, and skills in strategy development, inclusive leadership, and networking.

We are developing our next strategic plan in 2024 to prepare for its commencement in September 2025. This plan is key to our future development, and we need our Chair to work closely with the Chief Executive and their team to develop, help guide and lead the organisation in this process.

ThinkForward are being assisted in this appointment by the executive search firm, Society. Applications should consist of a CV and covering letter, and these can be uploaded via Society's website [here](#). The deadline for receipt of applications is midday GMT on Monday, 13 May 2024.



03. About ThinkForward

ThinkForward delivers unique, personalised coaching programmes for young people at a key stage in their lives, enabling them to overcome the challenges they face and make a successful transition into work.

The young people we work with face barriers such as lack of opportunities, growing up in poverty, having a learning disability, or being at risk of exclusion. Our coaches work closely with schools and local communities to provide the consistent support young people need to overcome these barriers and increase their readiness for work.

One-to-one coaching and exposure to workplaces encourage young people to develop their career goals and work readiness skills. Youth participation opportunities raise the voices of young people and enable them to make a positive change in their local communities.

Key Stakeholders



Charlie Green
Outgoing Chair



Ashley McCaul
Chief Executive Officer



Robert Posner
Deputy Chief
Executive Officer



Vanessa Morphet
Chair of Finance, Risk,
& Audit Committee

For more information, visit <https://thinkforward.org.uk/about/our-team/>

03. About ThinkForward Continued

Our vision is that every young person is empowered to gain the confidence, independence, and skills they need for a better and brighter future.

Our programmes and their impact

- Our FutureMe programme works with young people aged 13-18 who face challenges on their path to success to get them ready for the world of work in London, Nottingham, and Kent.
- The Making Strides programme adapts this model and works with young people from London, and the West Midlands who have mild to moderate learning disabilities with the aim of supporting them into sustainable paid employment.
- Our Future Leaders programme works with black students in London who have been excluded or are at risk of being excluded from school.

The need

The transition from school to the 'real world' is not always easy. Young people often lack insight into the reality of working life and what options are available to them. Many also face a variety of challenges, often overlapping, that can prevent them from getting the most out of their education and taking the next step successfully.

In the UK, 771,000 young people are not in education, employment, or training (NEET), representing 11.2% of 16–24-year-olds. Young people receiving free school meals are twice as likely to be NEET. ThinkForward programmes are unique in that they intervene early and take a long-term approach to supporting young people.



Over 80% of these young people whose destinations we know consistently move into positive employment, education, or training destinations when they graduate from our programmes.

Our Strategy

Our current five-year strategy will take ThinkForward through to 2025. The aims set out in 2020 in our strategy were ambitious and did not take a hiatus of almost two years into consideration. Our challenge for the next strategic period is to build our momentum. Our commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion will sit at the heart of our work to achieve our goals, and we will also ensure that young people continue to participate in our governance and shape the design of our programmes. For more information on this, please visit [our website](#).



Our Governance and Trustees

Our **Board of Trustees** provide oversight for all ThinkForward's activities, efficient administration, financial viability, strategic effectiveness, sound investment, and risk management.

The Board is currently made up of nine directors. The full board meets quarterly. There are four board committees all of which also meet quarterly; Finance, risk & audit; Programme & Performance; Development; Nominations. All trustees are expected to sit on at least one committee.

Asi Panditharatna

Asi is the Executive Director of Employment Services at The Forward Trust. Asi has over 20 years' experience as a manager and leader in the post 16 skills, apprenticeships, training and employability sector. Prior to joining Forward Asi was Director of Apprenticeships and Employability at Catch22. Asi was a member of the Mayor of London's Skills for Londoners task Force that developed the inaugural skills strategy for London. Asi is a member of the AELP London Advisory Board and Trustee of The Felix Project. Asi was awarded an MBE in 2023 as part of the King's birthday honours list for his work to help people access employability support and fulfil their potential.



Charlie Green (Chair)

Charlie is Chair of ThinkForward. He was a founder and trustee of the Private Equity Foundation in 2005, was involved in the creation of ThinkForward in 2009 and, as one of its original trustees, was heavily involved in the development of its first Social Impact Bond in 2010, the first SIB to repay its investors in full on its maturity. He became a trustee of Impetus in 2013 after its merger with the Private Equity Foundation, stepping down in December 2015 when ThinkForward was spun out and became an independent charity. He is also a trustee of Leander Trust, having previously been its Chair until 2020. He is a founder and director of 24Haymarket and is currently a non-executive director of several of its portfolio companies. He was previously a partner at Candover, a private equity firm, and prior to that a director of Morgan Grenfell and Deutsche Bank.



Dan Easterbrook

Dan is Senior Desk Officer, Secondary Legislation at the Cabinet Office and oversees the UK Government's delivery of secondary legislation. He studied Politics at the University of Exeter, before joining the Civil Service. Dan supports a range of initiatives to encourage young people to become trustees, including as a link Trustee for ThinkForward's Youth Advisory Board. He founded Adults with Hemi a peer support community for individuals with Cerebral Palsy Hemiplegia, which supports over 500 people to overcome barriers and share solutions to everyday challenges. He is a member of the Finance, Risk and Audit Committee.



Kathryn Jack

Kathryn is currently the Head of Membership and Events at the Association of Commonwealth Universities, a registered charity and global network of higher education institutions. Kathryn is a first-generation university graduate who qualified as a chartered manager through a degree apprenticeship programme. With three apprenticeships under her belt since leaving school, Kathryn has lived the experience of a more blended pathway into work. She is an experienced mentor, has worked on various SEND voluntary projects, and is passionate about social mobility.



Keith MacDonald

Keith has been a partner advising financial services firms for over 35 years, leading businesses for EY, CapGemini and Capco. He led EY's Wealth Management and Private Banking business for over 10 years, including chairing industry and philanthropic forums, and continues to advise organisations in these sectors. He is currently advising a range of fintechs and other start/scale ups on strategy, distribution, partnerships, and funding. He is also a trustee and adviser to several philanthropic and charity bodies. Keith is Chair of ThinkForward's Development Committee and a member of the Finance, Risk and Audit Committee.



Roxanna Patel

Roxanna is an employment lawyer at international law firm, FisherBroyles UK LLP. She also sits as a School Governor for Old Palace of John Whitgift School and is a committee member of the Governance & External Relations Committee for The John Whitgift Foundation. Roxanna often contributes her time to diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives, specifically in the legal profession and educational space. She is currently training to be an empowerment and mindset coach and is dedicated to doing work that helps to empower and progress young people in their lives and careers.



Sally Cartwright

Sally Cartwright is a young trustee and a former Nottingham student from our programme. She went to Ellis Guilford School where she worked with coach Daljit. Sally joined ThinkForward in 2016 and instantly embraced the benefits of the coaching relationship and the opportunities the programme provided. She is currently studying Law at university and works as a support worker for young people. Sally wants to help ThinkForward grow and be accessible to more young people.



Vanessa Morphet

Vanessa is the Head of Social Impact Investment at the Church of England. Vanessa started her career in the financial services sector at Goldman Sachs, Arma Partners and Wellington Management before joining venture philanthropy organisation, Impetus, where she first came across ThinkForward. Vanessa has also worked in government on social investment policy. Vanessa is Chair of ThinkForward's Finance, Risk and Audit Committee.



Matthew Tate

Matthew Tate is the Headteacher of Hartsdown Academy in Margate where he has been since 2016. Hartsdown is a diverse school with an extremely deprived cohort and during Matthew's time at the school has improved significantly through the establishment of a relational approach that has high expectations with high levels of support including a food bank, clothes bank and other services. In 2023 the school was the 11th most improved school in the country. As an Inclusive Leader of Education Matthew works across Kent supporting inclusion and better outcomes for children. He believes that an excellent education is a matter of justice and has worked in school improvement in London and Kent.



04. Role Description

We are looking for a Chair who has a passion for addressing the inequity our young people face. We define our young people by their potential, not the circumstances in which they live and find themselves, and want a leader who can see robust and innovative ways of supporting young people and their career progress, their social equality and mobility.

The Chair will liaise with the Chief Executive to keep an overview of the organisation's affairs and to provide appropriate support. They will lead the process of supporting and appraising the performance of the Chief Executive. They will sit on appropriate bodies including our nominations committee and, where necessary, disciplinary panels.

The Chief Executive is the external face of the organisation and, along with their executive and senior team, has a strong sector presence. We are looking for a Chair who is keen to represent the charity at functions and meetings, and act as a spokesperson as needed, particularly with funders.



Key responsibilities will include:

Strategic Oversight

- Ensuring that all Trustees and the CEO have a shared sense of purpose when embarking on development of the new strategy;
- ensuring there is a clear vision, values, and strategic direction, and that the strategic objectives are in line with the vision and mission of ThinkForward.

Board Leadership & Governance

- Driving continual development of the Board so that it can fulfil its role effectively;
- ensuring that all Trustees are fully involved in discussions and decisions, and provided with accurate and relevant information to allow them to fulfil their duties ;
- conducting proactive succession planning for all Board and executive roles;
- representing the organisation as required and developing positive relationships with all stakeholders.
- ensuring that the Board's agenda is appropriate and focuses on the key strategic issues;
- chairing board meetings and ensuring they achieve clear outcomes.

Executive Support & Delegation

- Enabling the CEO and Executive Leadership Team (ELT) to fulfil their roles, by providing support and constructive challenge, and facilitating collaboration between ELT and Trustees;
- establishing and building a strong, effective and constructive working relationship with the CEO, and other staff, ensuring they are held to account for achieving agreed strategic objectives;
- leading the appraisal process of the CEO;
- meeting regularly with the CEO to plan Board agendas, and to monitor progress and relationships;
- ensuring delegation to Board committees and working groups, within clear terms of reference.

Time commitment, Terms of Service, and Remuneration

- The Board meets on a quarterly basis - once a year in person and the other meetings are held remotely via Zoom;
- the sub-committees also meet quarterly on a remote basis. The term of service is three years, and this is renewable twice;
- the average time commitment for the Chair is two days per month;
- this position is not remunerated but reasonable out of pocket expenses incurred fulfilling the duties of the role can be reimbursed.

05. Person Specification

It is not essential for our Chair to have lived experience, but we are keen that they have an understanding and appreciation of the issues our young people face, the complexity of the environment in which they find themselves and have an open mind to the solutions we can offer.

The successful candidate will be expected to demonstrate evidence of the following skills, capabilities, and experience:

- Experience of, and an ability to actively contribute to, strategies to scale, improve, and adapt our services;
- prior experience working with civil society organisations;
- a comprehensive knowledge of governance in the third sector;
- successful track record of managing boards with impartiality to ensure objectivity in decision-making;
- excellent leadership skills;
- an understanding that the Chair is not simply a figurehead, but someone deeply engaged in the organisation and how the rest of the Board contributes effectively;
- experience of the education system and/or impact measurement would be beneficial.

Please note, that the successful appointee will have the benefit of a 3 month transition period with the outgoing Chair.



06. How to Apply

ThinkForward is being assisted in this appointment process by the executive search firm Society (www.society-search.com).

Applications should consist of:

1. a concise covering letter (ideally no longer than two pages), addressing the criteria in the Person Specification;
2. an up-to-date curriculum vitae;
3. names and contact details of three referees (although referees will only be approached at the final stage of the process, and only with your express permission).

To upload your documents via Society's website, click [here](#).

The deadline for receipt of applications is midday on Monday, 13 May 2024.



07. Appointment Details

The interview process will consist of a panel interview with the Board nominations committee, coupled with a 1:1 with the CEO and a 30-minute candidate-led Q&A session with a young person's stakeholder panel.

An appointment will be made subject to receipt of satisfactory references.

We are committed to ensuring that anyone can access our application processes. This includes people with hearing, sight, mobility, and cognitive impairments.

Should you require access to this document in an alternative format, wish to apply in a different format, or need any other reasonable adjustments made for you (including at interview), please contact us at inclusion@society-search.com. We also welcome suggestions or comments about any more general access improvements we should consider.





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Society is a global executive search firm and a certified B Corporation. 10% of our profits go to charitable causes through The Society Foundation. With colleagues in the United Kingdom, the United States, and New Zealand, we solve senior hiring challenges for responsible businesses and purpose-driven organisations around the world.

We believe that the right candidate, placed in the right organisation at the right time, can initiate a chain reaction of transformative change that will help to deliver a more inclusive and sustainable future.

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